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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

2003

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November 28, 1978

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY _____ DATE _____

RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE _____

TS AUTH. _____ REASON(S) _____

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DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELASABLE ☐

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ACTION
is assigned to

ARA

CA

Secretary of State
Cyrus R. Vance
Department of State
2201 C Street
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Vance:

As is most of the nation's populace, I am shocked about the occurrences in Jonestown, Guyana. I am deeply grieved at the murder of my colleague, Representative Leo Ryan and others, and revolted by the wide-scale suicides and murders of the Jonestown residents.

There are many unanswered questions which will require significant investigation. I plan to support Representative Clement Zablocki, chairman of the House International Relations Committee, in his panel's investigation of all aspects of the tragedy.

I am particularly alarmed by the reports that Embassy officials failed to adequately respond to reports of questionable behavior going on in this cult's community. So, too, I plan to join several of my concerned colleagues, at Representative William Whitehurst's directive, to push for a comprehensive investigation of all of the more controversial "religious" groups being cautious so as not to violate any of the religious freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution.

I, and many of my constituents, are appalled at the price the American taxpayer will have to bear because of the tragedy in Guyana. I do not feel the American public should have to pay the bill for the Guyana clean-up.

Some 200 U.S. troops were sent to Guyana to recover the more than 900 bodies--utilizing dozens of helicopters and 30 U.S. cargo planes to ferry the bodies back to the United States. The cost of this operation has been estimated at upwards of \$8 million. Is the American taxpayer going to be billed for this expense?

There will also be the additional expense of transporting some 80 survivors from Guyana to South Carolina to be questioned by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents. Who will pay for that?

-1-

[2]

RONALD M. MOTTL

Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance

November 28, 1978

Page 2

Furthermore, substantial additional expenses in conjunction with this ugly incident are certain to be accrued. Could you estimate for me what additional expenses related to your department might be anticipated? Where will these funds come from?

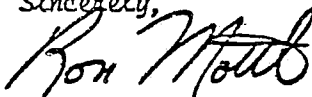
The People's Temple reportedly was not impoverished. It has been said that the Reverend Jim Jones and the Temple amassed some \$15 million in various assets by expropriating cult member's private wealth and social insurance income. If these reports are true, where is the money and what will happen to it? Will surviving relatives here in the U.S. be receiving any inheritance?

Media reports also note \$500,000 in currency, \$500,000 in gold bullion and numerous munitions were found scattered around the Jonestown camp. What is to become of all this? Does the government plan to attach these assets to recover its clean-up and transport costs?

The question also arises as what is to become of the facilities in Jonestown? Does the Guyanese Government take control, or is the U.S. government held responsible in some way?

There are just a few of my more immediate concerns which I feel you may be able to address. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



RONALD M. MOTTL
Member of Congress

RMM:ai